

*Our class attempt (minus the intro and conclusion) to answer the essay question:*

*Describe an idea in Macbeth & explain how it caused a strong reaction in you.*

*We chose the idea of evil*

*Two parts to the question*

- *Discuss the idea*
- *Explain HOW it caused a strong reaction in you (NOTE: this part of the question was NOT answered!)*

Intro - (to be completed. Address both parts of the question, introduce your text (underlined) and its author.

Para one – (explaining how the witches set the tone for the play) (purpose stuff)

William Shakespeare wrote this play for King James I, who was personally afraid of witches at the time. The early appearance of the witches in Act 1 Scene 1 suggested that the idea of evil would be present. The witches chant the lines “Fair is foul and foul is fair”, the words ‘foul’ and ‘filthy’ signifying their ultimate evil. As well as this, the idea of foul being fair and fair being foul sets up another important idea that things are not what they seem to be. The witches’ lines link to Macbeth’s first line “So foul and fair a day I have not seen” in Act 1 Scene 3. We can thus see the influence that the witches have on Macbeth before he has even met them and we get the idea that this is a character who will be tempted by evil. The witches early appearance in the play indicate the course of corruption Macbeth is upon, and plant the seed of ruthless ambition in his mind. (NEXT STEP – DESCRIBE HOW THIS CREATED A STRONG REACTION IN YOU)

Para two – how Macbeth becomes corrupt

One of the ways Macbeth becomes corrupt is from the influence of Lady Macbeth. When Macbeth is uncertain about killing Duncan, Lady Macbeth questions his strength and manliness. This is shown when she speaks aloud her thought “I fear you are too full of the milk of human kindness”. This implies that she doubts Macbeth can commit the crime of killing Duncan. Another way Macbeth becomes corrupted is when he goes to seek advice from the weird sisters. He describes being “in blood stepped in so far’ that ‘returning would be as tedious as go o’er”, basically deciding that because he has already killed, he is choosing an evil path and to keep on killing rather than trying to redeem himself. Shakespeare shows us Macbeth has become completely evil by stopping his soliloquies in the play. (NEXT STEP – DESCRIBE HOW THIS CREATED A STRONG REACTION IN YOU)

Para three – how the natural order of things is corrupted

In the play, after Duncan is murdered the natural order of things in an Elizabethan sense becomes topsy-turvy. Imagine for yourself a symbolic pyramid; in Elizabethan times God would have been firmly at the top with the King not far below. Animals came well below the king but even the kinds of animals had their place, so when a “falcon... was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed”, we know

that a measly owl should not be able to overcome the regal falcon. We thus know that something is up, particularly because the weather has taken a turn for the worse.

Para four – the resolution and what happens to this idea of evil

The theme of evil is resolved in the last act. This is shown though Macbeth's ultimate silencing as Macduff beheads him. Another example of this is the mental deterioration of both Macbeth and his wife. In 5.1 Lady Macbeth sleepwalks and exclaims "What? Will these hands never be clean?" frustrated that she still feels she has blood on her hands. Macbeth deteriorates in a different way, with his evil nature taking away all emotions. He mutters "I have almost forgot the taste of fear" as the sound of Lady Macbeth's death fails to rouse him. Both characters receive terrible fates as Lady Macbeth suicides, and Macbeth himself is beheaded. Shakespeare would have purposely had these characters who flirted with evil come to terrible fates to assure King James I that anyone who committed such evil acts would get what was coming to them.

Conclusion – need to write

BUT - THE SECOND PART OF THE QUESTION HAS NOT BEEN ADDRESSED! HOW COULD YOU ENSURE YOU DO THIS?